

Many battered women would be separated from their children for an undetermined amount of time if forced to leave the U.S. Often these women are the sole caretakers of their children. There may be no one with whom the child could stay or they would, might remain in the custody of the abuser. If a battered mother leaves the country, taking her children with her, she could lose custody of the children to the abuser under the Parental Kidnapping Prevention Act (PKPA). Forcing these battered immigrant women and mothers to leave the country places their lives and the lives of their children in danger.

We should reinstate our protection of battered immigrant women by allowing them to adjust their status to lawful permanent residency while in the U.S. in the same manner we allow immediate relatives of U.S. citizens to adjust their status. This provision would provide battered immigrant women and their children with approved VAWA self-petitions to acquire their green cards while remaining in the U.S.

Other immigration provisions drastically altered battered women's access to VAWA's suspension of deportation/cancellation of removal in two ways: it changed the way INS counts the number of years an immigrant has been in the U.S. and applies these changes retroactively to cases already filed, and it places a "cap" on the number of immigrants who are allowed to receive green cards through suspension of deportation/cancellation of removal.

To apply for suspension of deportation/cancellation of removal, a battered immigrant or child must have been in the U.S. for three years. Recent changes only count an immigrant's time in the U.S. up to the moment that INS becomes aware of their presence, regardless of how long they remain in the United States for deportation proceedings to conclude. This is especially detrimental to battered women immigrants because in most cases the abuser controls all mail and telephone correspondence addressed to the battered spouse. These battered immigrants may never know that INS had placed them in deportation proceedings. Suspension of deportation/cancellation of removal is an important tool for these women who are unable to file self-petitions for permanent residence because their self-petitions have been sabotaged by spouses who divorce them or who report them to the INS. Suspension of deportation/cancellation of removal is often the only remedy available to battered immigrant women in this situation.

We must restore the original manner of counting years in the U.S. for battered immigrants only. Additionally, we should stop the retroactive application of this new counting and reopen old deportation cases for VAWA-eligible battered immigrants.

Four years ago we passed VAWA strongly believing that battered immigrant women should have access to legal protections, be able to flee violent homes, and control their own immigration status and lives. Let us stand by that position.

IN MEMORY OF EVERETT W.
HANNON, SR.

HON. IKE SKELTON

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 21, 1998

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, it is with great regret that I inform the Members of the House of the passing of Everett W. Hannon, Sr., a councilman from Lexington, MO, on July 17, 1998.

Mr. Hannon was a native of Lexington and a graduate of Douglass High School. He entered the United States Army in 1952, and was honorably discharged in 1954. He served on the Lexington City Council for over 20 years, and was also employed with Allied signal as a Cost Reduction Representative for 25 years, until his retirement in May of 1993.

Mr. Hannon was an active member of the Lexington community. In addition to serving on the city council, he was Chairman and Treasurer of the Lexington Park Board, Board and Executive Board Member of Missouri Valley Human Resource Development Corporation, and a member of the American Legion, the Lion's Club, and the Second Baptist church of Lexington.

Mr. Hannon is survived by his wife Marjorie, three sons, two brothers, three sisters, an aunt, and seven grandchildren.

Mr. Speaker, Everett Hannon played many important roles in the Lexington community, and he will be greatly missed by all who knew him.

TRIBUTE TO OFFICER CANDIDATE
SCHOOL GRADUATE, SANDRA
BERNAL

HON. STEVE R. ROTHMAN

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 21, 1998

Mr. ROTHMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor my constituent, Sandra Bernal, on her recent graduation from Officer Candidate School (OCS). I am especially proud that Ms. Bernal, a resident of Teaneck, NJ, was awarded the Deputy Adjutant General Honor Graduate commendation upon her completion of the program. Ms. Bernal's accomplishment is a credit to her commitment to excellence and to her family and community.

As a commissioned officer in the Armed Forces of the United States, Ms. Bernal will be contributing her considerable skills and talents to enhance our Nation's defense. Those same attributes that gained her a commendation during her OCS training will now, thankfully, be brought to bear during her service in the New Jersey Army and Air National Guard.

For her service to our Nation, her dedication to America's liberty and freedom, I applaud Ms. Bernal's achievement. In the finest sense, she represents the best of America.

TRIBUTE TO FATHER TOM RUSH

HON. HOWARD L. BERMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 21, 1998

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to my dear friend Father Tom Rush, pastor at Mary Immaculate Catholic Church in Pacoima. Father Rush is leaving Pacoima for a leadership position in the international order of Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate. Father Rush will be sorely missed in the Northeast Valley. He is a figure beloved by people of all religious and ethnic backgrounds.

I have had the good fortune of being with Father Rush on many occasions. One of the most memorable was earlier this year when I attended dedication ceremonies for the rebuilt Mary Immaculate Church, which was destroyed in the Northridge Earthquake of 1994. The sanctuary was overflowing with church members and others who wanted to share the special day with Father Rush. That day I realized as never before how much Father Rush means to our community. He has touched countless lives through his spiritual guidance, commitment to social justice and dedication to helping at-risk youth.

Father Rush came to the Northeast Valley in 1973, when he became priest at Santa Rosa Church in San Fernando. In between other assignments he spent 13 years at Santa Rosa, before moving over to Mary Immaculate in neighboring Pacoima in 1992. At both Santa Rosa and Mary Immaculate, Father Rush, who is of Irish descent, established an extraordinary rapport with his overwhelmingly Latino congregants. It is entirely accurate to call Father Rush a leader in the burgeoning Latino community of the Northeast Valley.

In recent years, Father Rush has been a courageous and outspoken supporter of immigrant rights. Four years ago he carried an American flag in a demonstration against Proposition 187. In 1995 he was part of a group that met with Richard Rogers, District Director of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, to demand a speedier citizenship process. Rogers promised he would try.

Father Rush's pending departure has cast a pall over our community. Though we wish him the best, we also know that he is irreplaceable.

I ask my colleagues to join me in saluting Father Tom Rush, a man of warmth, compassion and remarkable energy who has brought joy and hope to many.

ISSUES FACING YOUNG PEOPLE
TODAY

HON. BERNARD SANDERS

OF VERMONT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 21, 1998

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to have printed in the RECORD these statements by high school students from my home state of Vermont, who were speaking at my recent town meeting on issues facing young people today. I am inserting their statements in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD as I believe that the views of these young persons will benefit my colleagues.

STATEMENT BY ISAAC EVANS-FRANTZ AND ALIANA LYON REGARDING GAY-STRAIGHT ISSUES

ISAAC EVANS-FRANTZ: Growing up gay, lesbian or bisexual can be very difficult in the society that we live in. Many gay teenagers are subjected to homophobia every day of their lives. 93 percent of Vermont educators reported that homophobic name-calling takes place with great frequency and intensity in their schools. We can assure you that these educators are absolutely correct.

Gays are frequently harassed at school, and many drop out as a result. Those kids who hide their sexual orientations because of fear sometimes suffer just as much. It is not surprising that suicide is the leading cause of death among gay youth. An overwhelming percent of gay and lesbian youth experience severe social isolation. It is often difficult for these students to find the resources and support that they need within their schools.

The silence about homosexuality not only affects gays, but affects our entire society. We are caught in a cycle of fear and hatred, which comes from ignorance. It is obvious that the bigoted remarks about gays that are so prevalent in our hallways are the result of an education we have not had.

ALIANA LYON: Prism, Brattleboro's Gay-Straight Alliance, was started two years ago as the answer to an urgent need of support for gay, lesbian and bisexual youth. The Gay-Straight Alliance is open to all who wish to attend, and sexual orientation is not discussed unless initiated by the students. The Alliance plays two major roles—it acts as a support group and an activist group.

Our group is composed of about twenty students and is supported by trusted faculties and community members. Prism is a comfortable atmosphere of caring people where issues of harassment, sexuality, homophobia and personal fears are freely discussed. When we are not sharing stories or concerns, we are planning our next project to make people aware of homophobia in our school or society.

We started working within our school first. We led discussions on homophobia in the freshman health classes, trying to create an awareness of our group's existence and the social issue. To involve the community, we showed an educational video called 'It's Elementary.' It discusses homosexuality with elementary school children, asking them what they think the definition of gay, lesbian or bisexuality means. It is followed by a sharing of experiences, ideas and information.

We have visited other gay straight alliances in Vermont and Massachusetts to inform each other of events happening, along with difficulties and successes of having an alliance in public schools. Statewide, Prism

has visited the Vermont State House twice for Teen Day at the legislature. The second visit, we facilitated a workshop in how to start an alliance, and how to find the support needed to sustain an alliance. We are not funded by the school for any of these activities, and we have paid for our own expenses by grants and donations.

ISAAC EVANS-FRANTZ: There are still many schools that provide little assistance for gay, lesbian and bisexual students. We feel that this support is important to their social and academic well-being. We would like to see our governments—local, state, and national—provide financial backing for schools to initiate gay-straight alliances.

Massachusetts has done just that. In 1992, the Governor and Lt. Governor established a commission to research problems affecting gay and lesbian youth. As a result, the Massachusetts government offered monetary incentives for schools to start groups for gay and lesbian and straight students. Hopefully, the work of Massachusetts will serve as a model for Vermont and the country.

Our state has made progress towards making schools safer for gay students. In March, our Governor and Commissioner of Education wrote a letter to Vermont school principals urging them to stop the harassment of gay and lesbian students. He reminded schools that Vermont law requires every school to maintain a policy prohibiting the harassment, including harassment of homosexuals.

We hope that one day, gay and straight alliances will no longer be necessary. Until then, we ask that our schools, our state, and our nation take an active role in making our schools places where all students are safe, valued, and respected.

Congressman SANDERS: A very good job.

STATEMENT BY SCOTT RADIMER REGARDING THE E.U. AND FREE TRADE

SCOTT RADIMER: Good afternoon, for those of you that are left.

I would like to take this chance today to talk about something that I found most people don't know about, which is the European Union, 15 countries in Europe, including England, Germany, Italy and France, along with others who are joining together—this has been in the works for the last 40 years, I think, moving towards one market, one currency, and becoming one economic power.

As this has gone along, it has become one of the biggest markets in the world. The gross domestic product of the European Union in 1992 was higher than that of the United States or Japan. The reason that this is important, it is not affecting us right now, but it will be affecting us in years to come, when I am in the work force, when the rest of us are, is that we are going to have to

compete with Europe. Many people talk about Japan and trying to compete with Japan, and this is going to be even bigger.

There are a few things that we can do. We could try and expand things, such as NAFTA, whereas Europe is moving more together, and North America could try and do similar things. We could also try and work just within the United States, or just Canada, or the rest of the parts of the world. The important things is not necessarily that we find a solution right now, but that we are at least aware that this exists and it is something we are going to have to deal with. It is better to start looking at these things now, before we have a huge trade deficit with a country now, instead of later.

Thank you.

Congressman SANDERS: Scott, thanks very much.

STATEMENT BY DANIEL NELSON REGARDING TROUBLED TEENS

DANIEL NELSON: Thank you, Mr. Sanders, fellow youth. I apologize, I have a little bit of a cold I'm getting over.

An issue that has been big on my mind is a lot of young people that are placed under state's custody. Young people that aren't necessarily troublemakers are getting into trouble and have troubles at home. I was one of those young people. I am still young, but not in that position anymore. I was placed in a group home, not in a foster home, but there are problems with both.

A lot of the times, young people are taken out of a home environment that might not necessarily be good. They can escape from physical abuse, but they don't escape mental abuse. There are a lot of restrictions put on these young people, when, really, they don't need restrictions; they need to be encouraged, shown that they can succeed, and that they do have potential. That is the last thing these young people get in group homes and a lot of foster homes.

I am not a person that likes to whine about things; I like to do things and make changes. This is something I don't know how to change myself, at least at this point in my life. After college, I hope to try and do that. But my suggestion would be if there is some way that these group homes and foster homes could be evaluated more effectively. These people that are condescending, say mean, hurtful things, and impose restrictions that are really not necessary, that they be removed from these environments. They are damaging young people that could be very effective in society, and I think would like to, if given the opportunity.

And that is about all I have to say.

Congressman SANDERS: Thank you.